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COMMUNISM IN THE THIRTIES

—James O'Gara

THE Commonweal

THE PATTERN OF COLONIALISM

by William Pfaff

Alastair Guinan

Joseph M. Duffy, Jr.

Frank Getlein

Henry Popkin

Vivian Mercier

Philip T. Hartung

Richard Hayes

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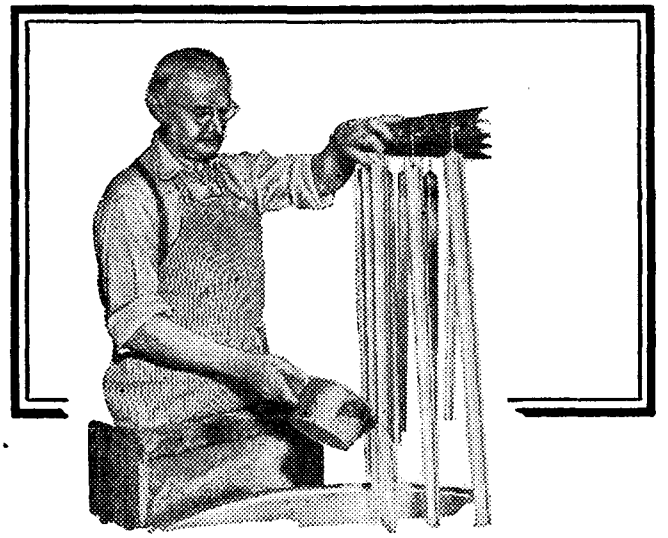

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The Commonweal

week by week

COEXISTENCE: YES; FRIENDSHIP: NO

PEACE seems to be breaking out all over. The Russians are smiling at us and we, somewhat shyly, are beginning to smile back at them. In the newspapers we see pictures of the Messrs. Bulganin, Khrushchev and Malenkov sipping martinis at a Fourth of July party in Moscow, and of Mr. Molotov posing in a ten gallon hat on his trip to San Francisco. After these, one is almost prepared to see pictures of Mr. Dulles performing a peasant dance at some collective farm celebration in the Soviet Union.

Mr. Eisenhower, on the day of his departure for Geneva, told the nation that he was going "to attempt with my colleagues to change the spirit that has characterized the intergovernmental relationships of the world during the past ten years." From the international conferences held during this period, he said, one ingredient has been missing—"an honest attempt to conciliate, to understand, to be tolerant, to try to see the other fellow's viewpoint as well as we see our own."

"I say to you," the President continued, "if we can change the spirit in which these conferences are conducted, we will have taken the greatest step toward peace, toward future prosperity and tranquillity that has ever been taken in the history of mankind."

These are remarkable words. Who had thought that Mr. Eisenhower could speak the language of 1942 so easily? Who had expected a Republican President to charge his Democratic predecessors with being *hard* on Communism? And yet this charge seems evident in the President's talk about our past failure "to see the other fellow's point of view as well as we see our own" and his belief that to remedy this failure is to take a great step toward peace.

Thus, on the eve of the Geneva Conference, we heard from the White House the beguiling language of peaceful coexistence, and this language sounds as dangerously unreal as was the language of "massive retaliation" we heard from the White House such a short time ago. Under Mr. Truman we pursued a policy of "containment," and the Republicans said this was not "dynamic" enough: what we needed, they argued, was a policy of "liberation." But now, after three years in office, a Republican President speaks not of liberation—nor even of containment—but of conciliation: we will, he says, "be tolerant because this nation does not seek to impose our way of life upon others . . . . we will extend the hand of friendship to all who will grasp it honestly and concede to us the same rights, the same understanding, the same freedom that we accord to them." A great change has obviously taken place, and as we await the results from Geneva it might be well for us to re-examine what is involved in it.

THIS magazine's position on Soviet-American relations has often been misunderstood by both the right and the left. On the one hand, we have consistently argued that modern war is no solution to the world's problems, that a resort to it is unthinkable, and that diplomacy, no matter how limited its achievements, must remain our major instrument in the cold war. Some form of mutual survival with the Soviet, we have said, is for the foreseeable future the world's only alternative to disaster. And because we have said this, certain of our critics on the right have suggested that we are "soft on Communism."

On the other hand, we have stated that in the present world situation this nation has no choice but to maintain a large military establishment as a deterrent to Soviet aggression. We have defended the paradox that if the world is to have peace the West must be prepared in certain situations to risk war. We have warned against any illusions regarding world Communism's ultimate intentions: they remain, we have said, subversion, slavery, and death. For this, certain of our critics on the left have called us "pro-war."

We have insisted, in short, that the struggle

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against world Communism cannot be solved by war, but that it cannot be solved, either, by refusing to recognize the struggle for what it is—a hostility that can have no end as long as Communism remains what it is. Our full diplomatic efforts must be exerted toward lessening the immediate dangers of war, towards seeking whatever compromises we can honorably come to with the Communist powers. We must be flexible and we must be non-dogmatic in our search for some *modus vivendi* between the two worlds.

But in some things the crusading anti-Communists are profoundly right: we can never be "tolerant" of a system which enslaves millions of human beings; we can never "understand" regimes which practice calculated deceit; we cannot "try to see" the viewpoint of those who have made systematic murder a cornerstone of their policy and totalitarian terror their pattern for domination of the world.

What, then, can we do? There are undoubtedly a number of areas where Western policy can be scrutinized and readjusted to bring it into a more realistic line with changed power situations in the world today. Like ourselves, the new Soviet leaders may have taken a look at the terrible possibilities of thermonuclear warfare and decided to make whatever adjustments are necessary to avert it. We can profit from this by making our own adjustments. For lack of any feasible alternative, we can agree to coexist, and take specific steps to guarantee that neither side will resort to arms. But so long as the Soviet Union is the Soviet Union, we cannot reach a state of world tranquillity, justice, and peace.

In his Christmas address of last year Pope Pius XII stated that "the principal foundation on which the present state of relative calm rests is fear. Each of the groups into which the human family is divided tolerates the existence of the other because it does not wish itself to perish." This state of things the Pope called coexistence in fear—and this is the only kind of coexistence the world seems fated to have for a long time to come—if it is to have any coexistence at all.

There is, it seems to us, a fundamental illusion behind talk of negotiating with the Soviet Union when it has proven its "sincerity." The Soviet Union can prove its sincerity only by ceasing to be, in any recognizable form, the Soviet Union. When the slave labor camps are abolished, when the terror is eliminated, when the satellites are free, then we can talk of "sincerity." In the meantime we must negotiate from strength, knowing all the time the enemy we face, even though the mask he wears may be friendly. In this knowledge, and only there, lies a chance for justice and peace.

NEXT WEEK

JAMES COLLINS writes about Kierkegaard on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of his death.

"There is a constant undercurrent of religious concern beneath all of Kierkegaard's writings. He is most interested in awakening in us a sense of God's personal closeness in all the circumstances of our existence. What Simone Weil describes as the attitude of waiting for God carries something of Kierkegaard's meaning of attending to God's providential call to each individual existent. For him, morality and religion are chiefly the story of the individual person entering into free relation with God and following Christ in the way that he is called. . . ."

SUGAR STRIKE

IN a recent issue of *Life* magazine, wedged in between a story on American homespun and another on Audrey Hepburn, was a report of a strike of fourteen hundred sugar refinery workers in southern Louisiana. It has been in progress since April, but it recently broke into violence when Leon Godchaux, president of Godchaux Sugars, Inc., started to bring in five hundred strike-breakers. One man has been murdered and fourteen beaten. The company claims that there have been forty acts of violence. Said Mr. Godchaux, "We may be faced with the problem of repopulating the entire community."

It is difficult to know whether the accent of comment should be more on the story itself or the reporting of it. The story as given in *Life* is illustrated with three pictures; two are of a man and a woman looking through broken window panes, and the third of six jailed strikers. There is no comment, pictorial or otherwise, on the causes of the strike, working conditions, wage demands, or possible provocations to violence.

Readers may recall another strike in the same Louisiana sugar country in the Fall of 1953; it was completely crushed. The strikers were sugar cane workers who were—and *are,* according to a spokesman for the Workers Defense League — earning forty-four cents an hour. The unions simply were not recognized, and the companies were backed by local courts which issued injunctions against every move the strikers attempted to make.

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Eventually, the strike came to the attention of the country partly because of the heroic efforts of Father Jerome Drolet to assist the workers.

The Louisiana sugar country seems to be a stronghold of social backwardness. "In 1879, the Knights of Labor led a strike of ex-slaves on the sugar plantations of Louisiana. It was broken by the state militia, and the strike leaders who had just been freed from slavery were sent to prison for trespassing on the property of the planters," reported the November, 1953 issue of the *Catholic Worker*. Recently Mr. Godchaux said to a union official, "What's the matter; don't you think we've been good masters?" And the local judge has threatened to jail a strike leader if he sets foot in the immediate area of the strike.

The lack of social conscience on the part of the management of Godchaux Sugars and the local courts hardly comes through in the pages of *Life* magazine in its reporting of a brutal and shameful situation. Five hundred strike-breakers recruited, very likely, from the unemployed in the surrounding villages should be enough for disinterested journalists to raise queries as to the propriety of the situation in the U.S.A. in 1955. Instead, one finds only sensational reporting on violence, and the rest is taken in stride; this is bad. But when it can be reported quite casually that a local grandee is talking in terms of moving entire populations there is real cause for alarm.

The violence on the scene is most certainly to be deplored. But it would not be the first time in the history of the labor movement that workers were baited to violence. And from the almost incredible statements of Mr. Godchaux, it is more than likely that the violence was begotten of well-founded fear of loss of home and livelihood; baronial truculence and adamancy do not beget peace. Then, too, it is a long, long time from April to mid-July to be without work. Men's tempers grow ungentle on a slender diet, and the knowledge that they are expendable and powerless.

TENNIS, ANYONE?

BEFORE he left for the meeting at the summit President Eisenhower entertained a group of leading American athletes at luncheon. The idea was to get some clues on solutions to the juvenile delinquency problem, and the poor health standards of our youth. The affair was interesting and colorful in the way that any collection of big names in entertainment, sport and related areas of endeavor are. It was good public relations for all concerned, it goes without saying. The real value of the conference—for the children at home in the baking slums of our overgrown cities—will be a little more difficult to assay.

For one thing, the cults of collegiate athleticism and professional "sports" have a rather dubious record for their spokesmen to read from in giving instructions on the moral problems of our children. Season after season the public is treated to seamy exposés of bribery and racketeering and other defections from acceptable standards of conduct on the part of athletes. It is not being maintained that their standards are lower than those of businessmen or politicians, but they have not maintained an olympian one from which to hand down dicta.

Furthermore, sport is a business. You invest in a baseball team, or you buy a "piece" of a prize-fighter in the same way that you invest in a coal mine or back a Broadway show. There may be nothing wrong with this, but it gives baseball players neither more nor less authority to speak on child crime than coal miners or chorus girls.

Sportsmens' conferences about crime have "appeal," but one is inclined to believe that the solutions arrived at on this occasion were a little on the facile side.

"The child is father of the man," and there is reason for anxiety in our present situation. Children operate according to the spirit of the society they live in; they correspond with it. And this society teaches such lessons in brutality and sensuality and the acquisitive spirit that it is a wonder that the "problem" is not even greater.

This society wears a false face. It sings of sport, the lithe and golden body and laughing heart in the clean out-of-doors striving disinterestedly, and it pretends not to know what transpires in the other half of its heart. But children are acute, and they listen carefully, and they know the message that comes through and they act on it.

It would be good, as Mr. Tony Trabert suggests, if more young men were to play tennis, instead of pushing dope at race-tracks. It is a matter of record that athletics have been used to good advantage in the development of children. But let no one think of them as the cure of radical malaise. We need more than palliatives at this point. And there is no need to spell out again such words as housing, good food, good schools, and all the rest of it.

BOOM AND BUST

THE economic history of this country has, unfortunately, been marked by sharp ups and downs. When the economy dips sharply down-

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ward, it has always meant tragedy and suffering. But in the present increasingly complex and inter-related world, it would mean even more. Now a severe economic depression would be a downright catastrophe, for the U.S. and the world. Nevertheless, economists do not know as much as they would like to about economic cycles. News, therefore, of the recent grant of $1,250,000 by the Ford Foundation to the National Bureau of Economic Research to further its study of economic cycles is good and welcome.

Yet to stop there would not be to tell the whole story. For there are many who treat economics as some kind of mumbo-jumbo into which it is better not to inquire too closely. Don't admit that depressions exist, and they will go away, seems to be their reasoning; don't talk about them and they will never happen. Add to this the fact that a rather good job has been done in recent months in giving all foundations a bad name for "subversive" leanings, and it is unlikely that all will in fact welcome the news of the Ford Foundation grant.

Such an attitude is, of course, nonsensical. Those who study depressions and discuss their causes are not showing our weaknesses to the world. Anyone who can help us to understand why depressions happen serves the nation far better than those who want to pretend we have never been anything but prosperous.

CRY PEACE

THE fact that General Matthew Ridgway differed sharply with Administration defense policies has been an open secret for months. At the beginning of June the retiring Army Chief of Staff gave his evaluation of those policies in a letter to Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson; now the text of that letter has, somewhat belatedly, been released.

In essence, General Ridgway challenged the Administration's policy of cutting back military manpower and placing primary reliance on the deterring effect of atomic airpower. As General Ridgway put it, it is quite possible that in any future war there will be a "common refusal" to use atomic weapons. This may include not only bombs which could devastate entire cities but tactical atomic weapons, on which the U.S. is currently placing such stress. In that event, the massive land forces of the Communist countries will be available to exert maximum pressure on other peoples. If present defense policies are continued, what will we then have to oppose such power? A ban on atomic weapons—whether by an agreement formally arrived at or informally observed—would under present circumstances leave the United States increasingly incapable of dealing with emergency situations.

Almost at the very moment that Mr. Wilson was casually dismissing General Ridgway's remarks, reports came from Washington that a further cut in U.S. forces in the Far East was being contemplated. At the same time new Communist aggression was threatening in Laos, where attacks on Laotian government forces have already taken place in clear violation of the 1954 Geneva agreement. There the Communists are thought to have two purposes in mind: to influence by intimidation the coming Viet Nam elections and to prepare for a Communist thrust into neighboring, rice-rich Thailand.

Here, then, is one of those situations which have become all too familiar. The brushfire wars of Asia cannot be fought with nuclear weapons, for in such situations the United States hesitates to use even tactical atomic weapons for fear of setting off large-scale nuclear warfare and because of the inevitable bad effect on world opinion. In other words, the U.S. is again face to face with a paradoxical situation; we are placing increasing reliance upon atomic weapons, although in fact we are unable to use them in many of the situations which actually confront us now and will continue to confront us in the years to come.

This country has a long and honorable record of being peace-minded. We in the United States have always been ready, even overly ready, to scrap our military defenses. But those who now cry "peace, peace" and welcome every move aimed at reducing U.S. forces should realize that unilateral disarmament is not the path to peace; it is the road to war. For the U.S. to continue to cut its military strength as we have been doing is simply an invitation for aggressors to ravish the innocent.

Is it Orwellian, as some say, to desire peace—as we do—and yet to insist that our military manpower should not be slashed? If it is, let it be. Possibly the world today is Orwellian; in any case, this is the world we have to deal with. If to cry peace is to invite war, it is worse than nonsense to cry it. There is no peace today, and the only chance we have for peace is to remain so strong that aggression brings no easy prizes, so strong that vice is not rewarded by painless conquests of the innocent in countries like Laos and Thailand. Secretary Wilson may be able to shrug off General Ridgway's criticism of Administration policy; we cannot.

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The Pattern of Colonialism

"THE CONGO RUNS WITH THE NOISELESS EFFICIENCY OF A LINCOLN, AND THE DRIVER'S SEAT IS IN BRUSSELS"

WILLIAM PFAFF

THE Belgian presence in central Africa is tight, pervasive, and distinguished by the acknowledgment by the Belgian authorities that it must end. The Congo runs with the noiseless efficiency of a Lincoln, and the driver's seat is in Brussels. Nobody enters a Congo port, nobody leaves one, no one brings in money, no one starts a business or buys land without the government's approval. The Belgian and Congolese governments own part—sometimes the controlling part—of every major industrial enterprise in the Congo. Such political power as the white population has is the kind indirectly exercised through the personal influence an individual may have in Brussels or in Belgian public opinion. The natives have no political voice. The Belgians make a strong case for this kind of all-powerful government and argue that the power is used to promote a progressive policy. If the Belgian policy works, and the Congo eventually becomes a free state in friendly association with Belgium, credit will have to be paid to the administration. But if it fails, there will be no difficulty identifying the doorstep at which to present the bill.

To describe this kind of State is to imply harsh autocracy. Such an implication is wrong. An anomaly in the history of colonialism is the fact that the only tangible opposition in the Congo to the Belgian government's colonial policy is found among the white settlers.

There are two kinds of Africa: the Africa of the White—the South African Union, Kenya's "White Highlands," much of the rest of British East Africa, and Black Africa—the Gold Coast and the other tropical and sub-tropical regions of the continent's west coast. The lines can be drawn along climatic borders. Where the climate is fairly temperate and favorable to agriculture the Whites have settled, established farms and made their homes. Where the climate is bad the Whites have come to mine or trade but not to settle. Where the Whites have settled is where the great troubles of Africa have fermented.

This is the second of two articles by Mr. Pfaff, who recently completed an extensive tour of the Belgian Congo.

In South Africa economic competition—or the obsessive threat of potential competition—has combined with religious racialism and the desperation of a people whose history is one of burnt bridges (the British settler in South Africa can always go home to England; the Boer has no home at all if South Africa is lost to him) to produce the catastrophe of Afrikanner *apartheid*. In Kenya the Whites made their farms on land which the Kikuyu regarded as their own. This land dispute, rooted in radically different and mutually incomprehensible systems of ownership, combined with the same economic-cultural conflict between the modern and powerful minority and the primitive and inarticulate majority to erupt in Mau Mau. Elsewhere in British East Africa compromises and balances and bridges are hastily being made to somehow alleviate this competition. Multi-racial government is what is being attempted, but some Whites resist government by the Blacks and some Blacks ask why they should not tidy up their land by driving the European into the lapping green sea.

THE Belgian Congo is, for the most part, spared this problem. Most of the Congo is equatorial forest sweltering in perpetual heat—the kind of heat which turns the face of Europeans not brown but dead-white, which gives them circles under their eyes and pares their nerves to the quick, which sends them gratefully home on semi-annual leaves and makes them work for the day when they can quietly and prosperously retire to a Flemish village or to the amenities of middle-class routine in Brussels. By far the majority of the some fifty thousand Belgians in the Congo are here temporarily. They work for Union Minière or Geomines or the colonial administration, or they sell bicycles or manage a store or work in a bank. Their homes are in Belgium. They work in the Congo.

In the Katanga in the Eastern Congo, the mining country, the climate is agreeable but the land is not very good. Perhaps it could be turned to profitable agriculture—the Congo government would like to see a vast increase and improvement in the colony's pro-

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duction of food, rubber, palm oil and the other raw materials which are grown on the land—but the government is also anxious to see that the development of agriculture be kept principally in native hands. Farther north is one of the most beautiful places in the world, the temperate Kivu province of volcanic lakes and fertile mountains and the UN Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi. Here there is a substantial settlement of white farmers, and here is a substantial Congo headache.

The white *colons* of the Kivu (and there are some elsewhere too, a few extraordinarily brave and tough ones even in the enervating equatorial region of Stanleyville) don't like government policy. They hold a variety of views, but most agree that *colons* should have a strong voice in the government, that there should be vastly increased white immigration, and, eventually if not sooner, independence with a vote based on property-qualifications. Some speak of a multi-racial corporative state, which is, of course, one form of property qualification. They say that they are the genuine pioneers and that their land is run by U.S. and UN-dominated career administrators (a charge in remarkable contrast to the United Nations criticisms of Belgian colonialism).

Some of them compare their present situation to that of the American colonists in the days of taxation without representation. They resent the extraordinarily prudent government land policy. Native land rights are scrupulously protected. A White cannot buy land in the Congo without obtaining a free statement from the tribe or tribes of the area that they not only do not need the land now but that neither their children nor their grandchildren are likely to have need of it. Then the government may or may not approve. If they do approve transfer of the land, the new owner must develop it within a stated period or lose it. One *colon* bitterly remarked, "the Bantus have to approve! The Bantus are as much foreigners here as we are. If the government wants to be so damned scrupulous why doesn't it get the Pygmies' approval? They were here first . . . ."

It is not unfair to say that the heart of the *colons'* argument with the state is simply this: the government has decided that someday the Congo will be run by the natives. (It must be added that few are willing to talk terms of *when* that day will come; nevertheless they acknowledge that it will come.) The *colons,* with their homes and families and futures committed to Africa, want as a desperate minimum some kind of government in which the Whites will preserve a veto, a special voice, some kind of device which will prevent their being submerged in a black nation.

The Belgian government believes that it has learned from the mistakes of other colonizers; it surely has had the opportunity. Its policy is, first, to raise the economic and social conditions of the native population. Secondly, while preventing the development of a native intellectual élite isolated from the native majority, to bring the general level of native education upwards. Thirdly, to withdraw Whites from the jobs which natives become capable of performing and to exclude from the Congo Whites who do not have established positions here and who might form a "poor White" class. The government wants to prevent economic competition between Blacks and Whites. Belgian administrators want the line between 'white jobs' and 'black jobs' to be steadily moving upwards, and they want no Whites with vested interests in certain jobs standing in the way.

The essence of this policy is peculiarly Belgian. Their plan is to create a solid, prosperous native bourgeoisie. They want no Nehrus; they want native burghers, sitting in the doors of shops, frowning upon radicals and reformers. It is precisely this which infuriates the Nehrus with Belgian colonialism. But the Belgians are stubbornly convinced that if they can create a nation of stolid, conservative, middle-class Belgians in black skins they will not have to worry about the Congo. A bourgeois nation will see the economic advantage of remaining associated with Belgium. A bourgeois nation busily making money will have no time for African nationalism or ideology. A missionary, a White Father, remarked, "we are replacing the Natives' old paganism with the new paganism." From bush to bicycles—and dangling in the economic future: automobiles, radios, the glamorous tinware of the West. Such is the bait by which the Belgians hope to distract the native from adventures in nationalism.

While this bourgeoisie is coming into being, the native is kept in tight tutilage. He has no political power, although there is a plan being discussed which would establish local councils of limited power with appointed and elected native members. He has a special status under the law. He cannot drink alcohol. If he lives in a city it is in a segregated quarter divided from the white city by a nightly curfew. If he works in the city or for industry his living and labor conditions and health are maintained by his employer under conscientious government supervision. (And the Belgian colonial civil service seems extraordinarily conscientious.) The forms of discrimination he suffers are characteristically tutorial—there seems to be little real racism among the Whites. There is social mingling. Educated natives join their white friends in white hotels and drink in white bars.

The plan to increase native income works. There is a government minimum-wage law, wages are steadily increased (to the distress of some white businessmen and *colons*), and there is a real prosperity among the urban natives. (It must be understood, of course, that all is relative: a prosperous native is one who owns a

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bicycle and sewing machine; a millionaire is one who makes ten thousand dollars a year.)

One flaw in the Belgian scheme is that the African is not an inordinately acquisitive person. He puts a high value on leisure. With the curious thoroughness which characterizes this administration, the government combats native indolence with forced work. The Congo code of civil law, 1954 edition, states that in order to provide villages and chieftainships with the cash income needed to provide local medical, educational and sanitary facilities, and to break down their isolation and involve them in commerce with other tribes and the civilized community, each village or tribe will have a quota of agricultural produce or small manufacture set by the district commissioner. This must not be so large as to force individuals to cooperate more than sixty days a year, and the produce must be sold on the free market (no forced sale, that is) and the income divided fairly among the tribesmen. Failure to meet the quota brings jail sentences. Thou shalt have a cash income or go to jail. There have been similar penalties in the civil law for violations of the labor contracts which natives sign with industrial concerns, but public opinion outside the Congo, that of trade union groups in particular, has influenced the government to begin to eliminate them.

EDUCATION in the Congo is like poor pudding, thick at the bottom and watery at the top. A handful of natives have had university educations. The general Belgian policy has been to discourage natives from studying in Europe. There is a new university, Louvainium, at Léopoldville, which is the first and only in the Congo. It has less than fifty native students at present, who will graduate three years from now. It will be a good school; the faculty intends to make the standards identical with those of its parent-university, Louvain. A second university is being talked about but is several years away. There are no doctors of medicine among the native population and no lawyers. The only native professional group is the native Catholic clergy; the Church is far ahead of the State in integrating the native and already has Congolese bishops. The Belgians say that they do not want a native intellectual class before there is an educated middle class, but the times and the aspirations of the Africans are pressing them hard. British Africa is not far away, and British Africa has plenty of African lawyers, many of them trained in Britain, all of them assuming substantial importance in the governing of their countries.

At the bottom, native education in the Congo is very widespread. There probably will be complete literacy in the colony well within twenty years. The ratio of students to population now equals Brazil and exceeds the ratio in the other East African states. This has been a great accomplishment. Secondary education is frequently given in non-segregated schools and a few native children, the sons and daughters of officials and of the matriculated natives, attend white primary schools.

But the depth of education in the colony is suggested by the detailed figures available on the Ruandi-Urundi, administered by Belgium under essentially the same policies as the Congo. In 1953 there were three times as many boys as girls in school. Of the total number of students, three-fourths were in the first two years of school, slightly less than a fourth were in third, fourth and fifth grades, a tiny fraction were in the sixth year, and only one hundred and eight in the entire territory were receiving secondary education. The figures for the Congo would be more favorable, and are constantly improving, but the pattern is the same.

There is no independent native press. There is a serious native journal published under government sponsorship and some religious periodicals, but all primarily are teaching organs. The African intellectual class that exists (one sympathetic White estimates that there are ten thousand natives in the Congo capable of meeting an educated White on equal terms) tends to stay away from the official press and read European publications. The Congo's future could be read—if it is to be read anywhere—in the beliefs and aspirations of these men.

There is, first of all, a class of natives who have full European status. They are called *immatriculés,* or matriculated persons, and are few in number—there are perhaps a hundred in the Congo. They obtain their status by the decision of one of the lower civil courts. A native who wishes to obtain a declaration of matriculation presents to a court, made up of a chief judge or magistrate and four other judges or aides, one of whom is a matriculated Congolese, evidence that his formation and manner of life is that of "a state of civilization which implies the aptitude for enjoying the rights and fulfilling the duties provided for by written legislation."

This evidence takes the form of diplomas, letters of reference, etc., and must prove that he dresses as a European all of the time, lives in a European-style house and in the manner of a European. Then if he has his wife's consent (she and the children follow the status of the husband), he is granted matriculation. He no longer is protected by tribal rights or the special privileges of reduced fines, limited taxation, etc., which a native in tribal status receives. He now pays the personal taxes of a European, can own property in any part of the city, live where he pleases, and be accorded all the privileges of any Belgian citizen in the Congo. There is also a lower legal status which a native may obtain called the Card of Civic Merit. It requires mo-

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nogamy, literacy (waived in the case of certain senior workers) and a record free of recent major crime. Holders of the card can drink hard liquor, are free of the curfew, and, should they go to jail, are exempted from the corporal punishment imposed in certain cases.

THESE two legal devices are curious things, almost inhuman in the way they graduate the degrees of civilization. (The law recognizes, of course, that there are civilized persons who prefer to remain in a tribal status.) The system is ingenious and undoubtedly serves a worthy purpose, but it also makes the majestic assumption that civilization is related to the degree to which the externals of a person's life resemble those of the European. A native must make himself into a European in order to become an *immatriculé*.

The question is whether the African wants to be a European. The question is whether an African *can* become a European. There is evidence that many natives resent the system of matriculation and resent the *immatriculés*. It is impolite to talk of Mau Mau in the Congo but one characteristic of Mau Mau may have some significance for the Congo: Mau Mau was in conception a deliberate turning, by European university-educated natives, away from European civilization to primitivism. Jomo Kenyatta revived the witchdoctor and ritual murder after he had attended one of the great British universities.

The overwhelming majority of natives are not concerned with these problems, of course. The great majority are barely literate and live in a protected tribal state. When they go to jail they may be whipped; but their fines are a fraction of those paid by Whites and they are tried according to the customs of the tribe and not by alien law. They are treated as children, chastised but indulged.

The devices of matriculation and the Card of Civic Merit are methods by which the Belgian government attempts to control the movement of natives from tribalism to full equality. The government regards any giving of substantial political rights to the mass of natives as demogogic nonsense. They ask with a certain amount of justification if the granting of full citizenship to other primitive peoples has not more often than not been a sop offered in place of social improvement. One civil servant asked what right the Indian government has to question Belgian colonial policy when the Indian people are poorer, with a lower literacy rate, than the Congolese natives. "Do the Indian peasants really know what this voting is all about? No. Political rights for the Congo's natives must wait until they are prepared to use them intelligently."

This, it seems to me, is the heart of the matter. Can one hold off granting rights until the people are judged "ready"? The aspirations of colonial peoples do not wait upon the perfect day. India was not "ready" for independence. The recent history of colonialism has pointed to one special lesson: you must gamble intelligently; you must grant one more right than the people are ready for. The Belgians believe that prosperity and security are most important to a people emerging from darkness. And it must be stressed that they have made the hard and admirable decision that freedom must be at the end of the evolution. But the pace of the evolution tells, and here, it seems to me, other equally hard decisions have yet to be faced by Belgium.

MANY-SIDED MAN

Newman and The People

ALASTAIR GUINAN

THAT John Henry Newman was great at the cost of all the rules is a truism among students of his work and personality. His achievements read like signs to be contradicted; and although he did not die without having received adequate recognition from the official side of Catholicism, his star nonetheless appeared late, because its rising was veiled in envious eclipse.

Mr. Guinan has written on religious subjects for a number of publications.

What is true of his life has, in a sense, been mirrored in aspects of his fame. Kingsley's attack on his honor and veracity; the debacle of Dublin; the thwarting of his attempts to establish a center of scholarship and influence for Catholics at Oxford; the over-refined difficulties raised in respect to his writings in the field of Biblical studies; the shameful want of understanding of his integrity as the editor of certain promising Reviews; the endeavor to associate him with theological Modernism;—all these are topics and

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notions which have now more or less found their settled place in history. But more recently, it is Newman's interest—or suggested lack of it—in social questions which has been the theme of considerable controversy.

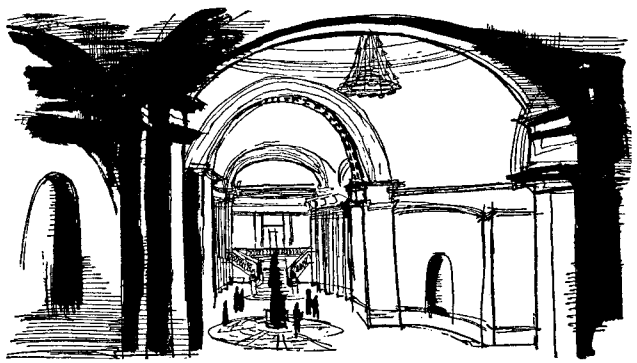
It was recognised by certain readers that not least among the deficiencies of Sean O'Faolain's *Newman's Way* is the suggestion that the Cardinal had little awareness of what was going on about him in the world of politics. Mr. O'Faolain presents him as a figure so busied in the contemplation of eternal good as to appear oblivious of the good and ill of his own time. It seems that he might have drawn his whole concept of Newman from words which the Cardinal at one time wrote:

> The world goes on from age to age, but the Holy Angels and blessed Saints are always crying alas, alas! and woe, woe! over the loss of vocations and the disappointment of hopes, and the scorn of God's love and the ruin of souls. . . . Times come and go, and men will not believe that that is to be which is not yet, or that what is now only continues for a season, and is not eternity. The end is the trial: the world passes: it is but a pageant and a scene: the lofty palace crumbles, the busy city is mute, the ships of Tarshish have sped away. On heart and flesh death is coming; the veil is breaking. . . . O, my Lord and Savior, let me die as I desire to live, in Thy faith, in Thy Church, in Thy service, and in Thy love.

YET those who over-emphasize this apocalyptic note in Newman's personality should be reminded that he was both a sublime rhetorician and a many-sided man. The fact of his rhetorical skill, and the admiration we feel for the way in which he threw himself into the declaration and delineation of whatever idea he was, at the moment, seeking to make convincing, should not lead us to think we have obtained a complete apprehension of his nature and personality when we have grasped merely a single facet of a creature wondrously and fearsomely made. For Newman's path in life covered the complex days of the last century and his realization of the diverseness of its spirit was unusually acute, even though his own foundations of intellect and temperament were laid in the era which had come to an end with the French Revolution.

So it is that Newman's admirers, as well as his critics, have sometimes been deceived by what was in him merely a manner of the moment; and even where they themselves have tried to strike a fair balance, many a paragraph taken out of the richly associative context of the Cardinal's mind is liable to disastrous misunderstanding.

THE most serious of latter-day reproaches against Newman is that he failed to share the enthusiasm for "the social gospel" so energetically displayed by Manning and Bagshawe among Catholic prelates



of his own day. The doctrine of the diversity of gifts, and the common-sense consideration that not all men must dig in the same garden, might be sufficient answer to such a charge—were it true. But one can, without much difficulty, compile a fairly lengthy series of passages in Newman's own works to confute this view; and we are told by Terence Kenny, in a recent *Blackfriars* article, that there is abundant material among the unpublished manuscripts at the Oratory which conclusively shows the view of Newman as a purblind recluse to be entirely false. Evidence, too, from the writings and letters of those who knew and conversed with Newman is already familiar to students of nineteenth century religious and literary affairs, and if this evidence is of somewhat varying quality and value, it becomes impressive when taken in conjunction with other data on the subject of Newman's awareness of the social and political problems of his age.

What the charge against Newman of anti-social unawareness really simmers down to in many instances is assertion of the fact that Newman's social and political awareness was far from being of the same type and temper as Cardinal Manning's. We can, I think, regard this assertion with considerable detachment; for whatever the achievements of the second Archbishop of Westminster, admirers of the Oratorian need feel no reluctance to admit a manifested difference between the two cardinals.

It seems to me that Manning, after all, was often the kind of ecclesiastic who is so persuaded that he is the exponent of the Will of God that he mistakes his own prejudices for the designs of Providence. In spite of his interest in the dock-workers, his readiness to be of service in the cause of social justice and his constant willingness to champion the poor, the

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impression remains that—despite his genuine humanitarianism—the Cardinal of Westminster really held a lower view of man than did Newman. Manning seemed unceasingly dominated by his sense of organization, by his interest in the mass of men in so far as they could be *used* for causes he believed good. Whether he busied himself with social concerns in England or moved about the Vatican Council organizing a cabal he remained the master of intrigue, a kind of ecclesiastical jobber, the man who gets things done even if a few careers—or hearts— are broken in the process.

This view may be overly harsh, and of course it is marred by the unreality that thumb-nail sketches always have about them; but one easily sees Manning, while he is making his influence felt here and there, as a sort of master chess player, putting one man in this place, another in that, and a third entirely out of circulation, because such disposition of them fitted in with his plan. And his plan, of course, was always the fulfillment of the Divine Will; his policy a humanitarianism which needed no justification: its bare statement, even, was unnecessary; for only in execution would its goodness and wisdom be evident and overwhelmingly convincing to those who survived its application.

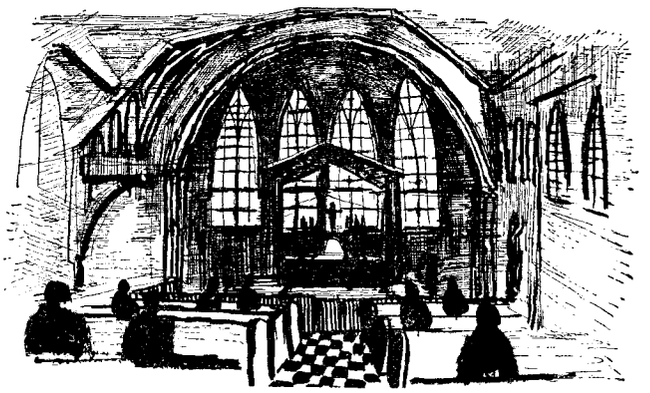
Newman, on the other hand, if he seemed to look somewhat indifferently upon the problems of a world seething with religious unbelief, with the strain of accommodation to scientific discoveries, and with an increasingly apparent burden of economic misery, did so because he evidently thought—as Coleridge, Carlyle, and Ruskin thought—that these problems had to be solved by a resolution of the moral and spiritual dissonance in man. This philosophy seems to me basically more humane, more "liberal" and more individualistic than the busy humanitarianism of a Manning, whatever its social virtues.

"NEWMAN," wrote Professor Harrold in his study of the Cardinal, "never patronised or flattered the common man; he made no attempt to disturb or to convert him; he seems to have had no faith in popular education." He goes on to tell us how profoundly undemocratic the Cardinal was, and how for him "the word 'democracy' still retained a great deal of its original connotation suggesting anarchic domination by a mob." Yet, he observes, if Newman disbelieved in social equality, he "also believed in a democracy of the spirit far more revolutionary, if practised, than any secular kind. If Newman is unsympathetic with the working man's efforts to 'rise in the world,' he is equally unconcerned with the rich man's acquisition, retention, or increase of his wealth; in fact, he is extremely unsettling, as we have seen, to the rich man's peace of soul. Newman was concerned only with the soul of the man underneath the 'social problem'."

That this primary concern was more a matter of chosen emphasis than of either deliberate or indeliberate blindness to the outward manifestation of the problem, there is good evidence: it was not a mind heedless of the dilemma which has only begun fully to reveal itself in our own day which could discern, as we learn from Ward's *Life* that Newman did discern, the awful possibility of a "new Barbarism," coming from the frustration of the masses who, as Newman said a generation ago, "will rise up from the depths of the modern cities, and will be the new scourges of God."

If, then, Newman seems to stand in some isolation from the issues of his own age and from those of our time, the isolation is more apparent than real. He had early determined the radical problem in created existence to be religious, moral, or intellectual; he never shared, moreover, the theological imbalance of those who fail to distinguish between the Gospel and "the social gospel." The points of emphasis which to him seemed vital and essential transcended the obvious issues of the day, and he saw them as concentrated rather in the challenge of certain great forces which would outlast his own time and ours as well. His legacy is a religious and an educational one, aimed primarily at the individual in its pertinence and its appeal. He sees and is appalled by the alienation of the world from God; but the same incisive intellect which so searchingly and sympathetically viewed the world's difficulties, reasoned too that the preservation of the spiritual bedrock of Western culture is a matter for the individual human personality to apprehend, each one of us in his own separate being, before we can join in asserting it socially.

Essentially, the message of Newman is the message of the Gospel: "The Kingdom of God is within;" and his legacy to the Christian humanist of today is the injunction that by developing the seeds of that Kingdom within the self man will reach the point where he can confidently associate himself with other men in planting and fostering those seeds in the soil of the society which they share with their fellows.



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THE STAGE

A SCHOOL FOR SHAKESPEARE

MR. John Burrell is a sandy, sober Englishman of middle years and private charm and distinguished repute who has been engaged to direct the Academy of the new American Shakespeare Festival Theatre at Stratford, Connecticut. To this most delicately exacting of assignments, Mr. Burrell brings a theatrical background of variety and substance; it was he, together with Sir Laurence Olivier and Sir Ralph Richardson, who elevated London's Old Vic ensemble to that postwar point of lordly excellence which it has not since equalled. Now, as mentor of the only dramatic group committed specifically to the development of stylistic proficiency in Shakespearean performing, Mr. Burrell must enlist his energies in another cause: the redemption of American acting from the naturalistic impasse in which it is mired, and the formation of a company—flexible, secure, expressive—which will create and invest a viable national tradition of playing Shakespeare.

In the patrician offices of the Theatre Guild one afternoon last week, Mr. Burrell was pleased to discuss this most decisively important phase of the Festival's activities which he will control. Some five hundred actors, he noted with obvious satisfaction, had applied for admission to the Academy's initial program. Out of these, Mr. Burrell and his associates sifted forty of the most promising and accomplished, scholarship students chosen for intensive instruction in the background and conventions of the Elizabethan theater, in analysis of the various Shakespearean styles, in diction and projection and dramatic expression of the verse, in grace and accuracy of stage movement. After an audition before officers of the Festival, nine students were then selected for active participation in this season's productions of "Julius Caesar" and "The Tempest." Their scope will be limited, and their dramatic opportunities small, but they shall form nonetheless that hard nucleus of distinction and skill from which, Mr. Burrell hopes, the Festival Theatre itself shall develop in a steady organic growth.

Mr. Burrell had, then, occasion to take the temper of the national theatrical sensibility before it is corroded by fashion or the insistence of the market: what would seem to him the particular strength or characteristic center of American acting? "Integrity," came the surprising reply: "an absolute concern with the inner truth of the role, the performance, the character." Surprising, because I had expected the conventional assessment, the one I might have made myself: a primacy of personality, a meagreness of finish, technique, classicism. Mr. Burrell would disagree with, or rather amend, this facile analysis; he finds our actors in no way impervious to the intangible subtleties of 'style.' Given the confidence of their mentor and the fullness of a repertoire (which Shakespeare eminently provides): given, above all, the dramatic challenge, Mr. Burrell found his young players beautifully flowering in a richness of stage accomplishment, their private personalities liberated in the truth of a larger 'personality,' and touching at so many more points both the visible world of dramatic art and the reality of which it is only a shadow.

'Integrity' and 'inner truth' suggested quite logically the Actors Studio, that experiment of Messrs. Strasberg and Kazan which is, as you prefer, either a *bete noire* or the saving remnant of the American theater. Again, what did Mr. Burrell think? and again, a qualified dissent. 'The Method', he agrees, has had its indisputable triumphs; it records a kind of sensibility, personal as well as dramatic, very much of this time and place. The fault lies in regarding it as more than a tool, in making of it indeed a program: the imposition of a vision and a sensibility on actors irrespective of the particular shapes of their talent. Mr. Burrell's own 'method' is altogether more generous and flexible, less rigid. He would guide his young performers in the liberation of their essential personalities, the discovery of their real selves as well as their stage *personae*. Ultimately, he feels, the director who would seek to influence and develop dramatic talent must have that kind of passionate concern with responsible individuality which our society no longer seems to wish to encourage. Mr. Burrell will have ample opportunity to encourage it at his new Academy in Stratford, and one may hope that the distinction of mind and experience which he brings to the task will be felt emphatically in the formless and incoherent chaos of contemporary theatrical practice.

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

LILACS ON A PALM TREE

WHETHER or not you read the novel, *Mister Roberts,* by Thomas Heggen, or saw the play by Heggen and Joshua Logan, you probably know they were about the tedium of war—especially aboard the USS Reluctant, a cargo ship in the Pacific that fussily goes about delivering supplies to the battleships that get into real action. The title character is the likeable and understanding Lt. (j.g.) Roberts (made even more likeable on the stage, and now in the movie, by the soft-spoken but

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determined manner of Henry Fonda) who knows that war's unseen enemy is boredom. Roberts takes on the unpleasant task of interceding for the men in all the rows between them and their over-efficient, mean spirited captain, who is played by James Cagney as a caricature of all officious, petty bosses.

Leland Hayward, producer of the play, has come up with a handsome movie production; but I suspect he decided the film should be bigger and better than what went before. CinemaScope and WarnerColor elegantly spread the appealing and rather simple story across a wide screen that adds little to the characterizations in the script by Frank Nugent and Joshua Logan. Since this is a partially realistic movie about men in wartime, some of the talk and incidents are not exactly appropriate to more sensitive audiences. But some of the jokes are quite amusing; and some of the themes, especially those connected with Mr. Roberts' effort to help the men, have a nice quality. "Mister Roberts" uses effectively the old Hemingway technique of combining hairy chests and hearts-and-flower stuff.

Since both John Ford and Mervyn LeRoy directed "Mister Roberts," it is rather difficult to tell who is responsible for what, especially for the exaggerations that detract from the intimacy of the story. Certain aspects of Heggen's tale (the use of the sad-looking palm tree as a symbol of the martinet captain; Mr. Roberts' successful trick to unite sixty-two individual men into a crew; and the lump-in-the-throat finale) were not lost even in the over-expanded movie which still should win some laughs and perhaps a few furtive tears.

IF you think murder is funny, you're likely to have quite a good time at "We're No Angels"—at least for the first half of the film until the joke wears thin. The lovable rogue type usually leaves me cold, and since this comedy has three such characters, I warmed up to neither the play (which stemmed from the French hit, "La Cuisine des Anges," by Albert Husson) nor the current movie version.

The so-called "angels" (and the movie thinks it's as funny as the deuce playing around with this idea) are a swindler (Humphrey Bogart) and a couple of murderers (Peter Ustinov and Aldo Ray) who escape from Devil's Island in 1893 and start to rob a French storekeeper when they discover he and his family are charmingly naive boobies very much in trouble. The three desperate criminals who would do *anything* to escape are really softies who don't think it's quite fair that they should fall in with such nice people. They just can't resist the temptation to stick around through the Christmas holidays to use their wiles to help this nice family, who are nicely played by Leo G. Carroll and Joan Bennett as father and mother, and Gloria Talbot as their young, marriageable daughter. Helping these good folk who are on the verge of bankruptcy seems to consist mostly of disposing of mean Uncle Andre (Basil Rathbone) who owns the store and selfish Cousin Paul (John Baer) with whom the daughter thinks she's in love. They don't just bump off these unpleasant characters, but they do put Adolphe, their pet snake, to work; and he does the job more or less naturally.

"We're No Angels" does have its amusing moments with Bogart and Ray and Ustinov clowning around, and scriptwriter Ranald MacDougall's lines are often funny; but the whole thing is not half as hilarious as Director Michael Curtiz thinks. No doubt this movie is trying to laugh off crime and murder in the manner of "Kind Hearts and Coronets," but it lacks the high wit and brilliant satire which distinguished the English film.

THE humor in "Pearl of the South Pacific" is not intended, but there are some good laughs. I suppose Producer Benedict Bogeaus and Director Allan Dwan planned an adventure film in which black-hearted David Farrar, Virginia Mayo and Dennis Morgan go to an unspoiled isle to rob the natives of black pearls. For a few moments Miss Mayo, posing as a missionary, is almost convincing, but neither the trio of scriptwriters who thought up her lines or Director Dwan took any of this business seriously and they wound up with a cliche-heavy satire on all other South Sea pics.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE CONSERVATIVE VISION"

San Jose, Calif.

TO the Editors: I wish to thank you for allowing Mr. Frederick Wilhelmsen the opportunity to present "The Conservative Vision" [June 24]. It seemed to me somewhat paradoxical that what was termed "the conservative vision" was one of the most progressive articles to appear in your "progressive" magazine for some time. The position expressed by Mr. Wilhelmsen appeared to be so perceptive that it far surpassed the proverbial pre-vision of the most radical liberal; not indeed by its glance into the future, but by its penetration into the cultural roots of the present and past.

This was a vision which did not attempt to supplant the liberal position, but which penetrated far beyond

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it. As liberals (or whatever you wish to term progressives) let us admit that we operate within a given economic and social heritage. It would be well, then, to search for the origins of this heritage, for it is not only the milieu within which we work, but it also offers us the tools with which we attempt to remedy and reform the *status quo*.

Mr. Wilhelmsen's article should challenge all liberals, for it poses a provocative question: are not the remedies we use in reform of the very stamp of that which we are attempting to change? Mr. Wilhelmsen does not disagree with the basic position of the liberal—that there ought to be a change; he merely points out that the liberal's solutions to the present social and economic problems are but a prolongation of the more basic evils inherent in our modern heritage.

There seems to be little historic ground for opposing the Tawney-Weber-Belloc thesis regarding the religious origin of modern institutions. Nor does it seem plausible to deny that these religious influences have informed our modern culture. Having been divested of much of his natural and superficial dignity, modern man has sought to create his own dignity; he has sought to form and not be formed; he has sought to conform everything to himself, with little thought that he must conform to an order which transcends himself. Since the modern mentality has lost contact with genuine values preserved through a traditional society, modern liberal man has sought to change all of reality, instead of accepting it as it essentially is. In Mr. Wilhelmsen's words: "If modern man is the demiurge who reworks creation in his own image, traditional man—even as he survives into our day—is the man who celebrates the things that are."

You are certainly to be congratulated for giving space to a "vision" which views our modern dilemma not on the sociological and economic surface, but which penetrates into its very metaphysical substructure.

RAYMOND DECKER.

CATHOLICS IN CONGRESS

Oakland, Calif.

TO the Editors: A letter by J. M. O'Neill on "Catholics and the Movies" was published in your issue of June 24. In his letter Mr. O'Neill reported an analysis of the voting of Catholics in the 79th and 80th Congresses which reportedly showed that Catholics were more liberal by a wide margin than are non-Catholics. Mr. O'Neill also attempted to demonstrate such a relation. However, there are so many difficulties present in the nature of the material that it is quite difficult to prove Mr. O'Neill's contention in a statistically significant manner. The articles quoted from the *American Catholic Sociological Review* and from The Commonweal by no means show that Catholics vote more liberally than the rest of the members of Congress. To prove that Catholics do so vote, it would be necessary to show that Catholics vote more liberally when one takes into account the voting of other congressmen who represent the same types of districts, the same types of constituencies. This was by no means done.

Dr. Duncan MacRae, of the University of California, has developed Gutman scales to show the relative position of the various members of the 81st Congress. For Democrats, Dr. MacRae has scales on Communist Control Legislation and Welfare Legislation. On the Communist Control Legislation, Catholics voted exactly in the same scale position as the rest of the congressmen. On the Welfare Legislation scale non-Southern Catholic Democratic Congressmen voted more liberally than the rest of the congressmen. But Catholic Southern Democrats on the same scale did not vote differently from the rest of the congressmen from the South.

For Republicans, MacRae's scales on Rent Control and Welfare Legislation gave similar results. On Rent Control Catholics voted a little more liberally than the rest, but not so differently as to be statistically significant. On Welfare Legislation, there was no difference between the Catholics and the rest of the Republican Congressmen. . . .

One can say, without fear of contradiction, that no test has yet shown that Catholics are more conservative in their voting than the rest of the Congressmen. However, no study which I have yet seen has shown that Catholic Congressmen are more liberal in their voting when one takes into account the other variables such as party alignment, urban-rural and North-Southern dimensions. I have myself tried to do such a study and find that I am not able to prove a hypothesis of this nature. Those writings up to this date which claim to prove such a hypothesis have merely shown the lack of statistical sophistication of their authors.

I would like to plead for less of such activity. It is not necessary for us Catholics to make *ad hoc* studies along these lines. Sociology and Political Science best serve the cause of God when they are done simply from a motivation of the love of truth. When Catholics who are or should be scholars become special pleaders they do harm to their own cause. Their writings leave in the mind of the non-Catholic reader the idea that Catholics are not interested in the truth as such but merely in proving a case. Studies by Catholics in the social sciences must first start with the intention of finding some special facts—of investigating social phenomena with the idea of learning about it, rather than of providing a bit of ammunition for the apologist. . . .

WM. BATES.

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Communism in the Thirties

JAMES O'GARA

THE thirties seem far away. Too many things have happened to the world since then for us to remember those turbulent years very clearly. After all, Detroit's Battle of the Overpass (or was it the Underpass?) pales beside Iwo Jima, and the Memorial Day massacre hardly compares with the last days of Berlin. One way or another, the thirties are getting away from us; the scars remain on our national subconscious, I am sure, but on the conscious level the events of the thirties have somehow become plastic, subject to tricks of selective memory and creative manipulation.

When I think of the thirties, it is in terms of the depression. I remember the banks that closed and the men without work, the factories that were boarded up and the people who lost their homes. I remember that there could have been ten times as many Houses of Hospitality and still the poor in America's cities would not have been cared for. I remember the farmer who told me that it was better for him to burn his corn than to haul it to market with the price at thirteen cents a bushel.

These were what you would call human tragedies. But I remember too the way the depression affected the political climate. Somewhere between ten and thirteen million people were out of work, and eventually something like one-fourth of all the families in the nation were on relief. You could hardly expect a tragedy of such proportions not to have political repercussions. Father Coughlin's *Social Justice* was being sold outside the church doors, and the Christian Front was reported to be strong in the East. Some Americans had kind words for Mussolini's experiment, the Technocrats were flourishing, and Huey Long was winning national attention when he was cut down by an assassin's bullet. The papers said Roosevelt's NRA was fascist, but many people did not seem to care what it was called if it would work. The businessmen-prophets were in disrepute, and the country was in trouble.

What would have happened if Roosevelt had not come along or if he had lacked the nerve to experiment? No one knows, of course. Norman Thomas once complained, half in jest and half in earnest, that the Socialists could not win elections because first the Democrats and then the Republicans had stolen their platform. There is, I think, considerable truth in the observation. If the depression had gone on for too much longer, almost anything could have happened.

These are the kind of things I remember when I think of the thirties. They do not make up the complete picture, I know. But they are part of it, and often when people speak of the thirties today, the years I knew are not even in the picture.

Catholics in particular, it seems to me, should try to remember the thirties as they were. For these days the only reason most people discuss those years is in connection with Communism, and many Catholics seem to find it terribly difficult to understand what could prompt any American to become a Communist. This attitude is probably natural enough. For Catholics, Communism was never any particular temptation; we had its true nature impressed on our minds from childhood on. But if we are to be even reasonably fair to those who had to learn the nature of totalitarianism the hard way, we ought to remember the way things in the thirties really were.

IN their book, *Report on the American Communist*, which was published in 1952, Morris L. Ernst and David Loth estimated that in the last thirty years seven hundred thousand Americans have left the Communist Party. What can one say about them now? What motives impelled them to join? It is a fact, I think, that many people in the twenties and thirties thought that the only choice was between Communism and the bourgeois business civilization of Calvin Coolidge or the ineffective capitalism of Herbert Hoover. This was not, surely, much of a contest, and as a result they joined the Party by the thousands, particularly when Fascism became a rising tide in Europe. Most of them went in with enthusiasm, stayed a while, then left in disgust. They had made a wrong choice. But this does not mean that the Calvin Coolidge idea of society was right either.

Take Alger Hiss, for example. He is discussed in a new book by Murray Kempton which goes far toward recapturing the shape and sounds of the thirties [*Part of Our Times: Some Monuments and Ruins of the Thirties*. Simon and Schuster. $4.]. Like everyone else, Kempton addresses himself to the central question: Why? Why did people like Hiss become Communists? One of the reasons, Kempton thinks, was

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guilt—"the guilt of inaction in a time of action, the guilt of serving oneself first in the face of knowledge that it is better to serve others. . . . The men who became Communists out of that sense are spoiled priests. . . ."

If Kempton is correct and Hiss had a sense of guilt, that does not, of course, justify espionage. But it is, I think, to his credit, and it indicates the nature of the problem. It *is* wrong when ten million people cannot find work. It *is* wrong when children do not have enough to eat. It *is* wrong when homeless men sleep in doorways. It *is* wrong when shoe factories stand idle while men stuff cardboard in their shoes to keep their feet off the pavement.

I am not saying that everyone who joined the Communist Party in the depression days was a starry-eyed idealist; I do not know, but on the face of it any such generalization seems unlikely. Most people probably joined for a variety of reasons, good, bad, and indifferent; such a step then, after all, did not involve the major decision it would today. The motives of many who joined were undoubtedly mixed, as are those of almost everyone for doing almost anything. Many probably joined the Party for the sake of action rather than inaction, as Kempton puts it, and there are worse motives. Many who joined the Party, I am convinced, were initially prompted by idealism and moved by compassion. They were misled, they were duped, they were whatever name you want to put to it. But they were not, by and large, lukewarm, and there is something to be said for that, too.

DESPITE the pamphlets in which Communism is called Red Fascism, Communism and Fascism differ radically at least in the central myths that animate them and attract members. At the heart of Communism lies the belief that the movement is dedicated to social justice and human brotherhood. This is pure myth, but it is one to which millions of people subscribe. Communism is totalitarian and horrible in operation, but it has the appeal of a pseudo-religion. Its attraction rests on the fact that it has stolen Christian ideas like justice and brotherhood. In a world which hungers for both, this is what makes Communism so dangerous.

What attraction does or did Fascism have? Essentially it involves the glorification of violence and hate, the enthronement of racism, not as ugly facts behind a mask, as in the case of Communism, but out in front for all to see. Where is there any beauty or goodness in these to lure the unwary? For this reason, those attracted to Fascism in the United States were, I think, types quite different from those attracted to Communism. The Christian Fronters, the Silver Shirts, the Nazi Bundists were, you might say, hate-full. This fact may make no difference at all in the objective evaluation of the two rival ideologies, but it makes a big difference when one discusses those who were attracted to each.

People have, I think, a rather distorted notion of what it meant to be a rank-and-file American Communist in the thirties. Perhaps that is inevitable, in view of Hiss, Chambers, Bentley, and the others who were involved in espionage. Obviously, one spy is one too many, but it seems quite clear that the run-of-the-mill Communists were never asked to perform such tasks. What did they do? The motives of the Party leadership were cynical, but the rank-and-filers did get out and picket for interracial justice when most Christians would not lift a hand. When the relief supervisor cut a family's food budget, they did protest and sometimes the cut was cancelled. When people were being fired for joining unions, the Communists signed up; they did come to meetings, and they often ran unions simply because they were willing to work when no one else would.

The unions provide a good example. If worst came to worst, the Party would sometimes try to wreck a union it could not control. If that day came, some Communist union men would quit the Party in disgust; others would follow orders and join the wrecking squad. I am not forgetting that, but I also cannot help remembering those who wrecked unions by inactivity, or by not joining in the first place.

For a brief period during the depression I had some experience in a CIO union which was trying to organize an industry where $14 a week was the prevailing wage. People joined the union who I felt sure were Communists. I would not have wanted them to run the union, but although I was at the time a member of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, I cannot say their presence bothered me too much. They had a weakness for wanting to bring in speakers on Loyalist Spain or on some other current interest of the Party, while the rest of us were worrying about how to get wages up to $18 a week, but that was not too serious a fault. They were there, anyway, and they did risk hard-to-get jobs by joining the union in the first place. I remember that, and I remember that it was not easy to get Catholics to join. And I remember too (this would not be true today) that there were only a handful of priests in the diocese who were willing to get out and assure hesitant Catholics that they had the papal encylicals on their side.

When I think about the thirties, these are the kind of things I remember. To me, they seem important, and I do not think they should be forgotten. The thousands of American Communists who left the Party in the last three decades are now fading into

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history. I do not mourn their passing, but I do not think we should be quite so ready to throw the last stone.

WHAT Mr. Kempton has written is a series of reflections on Communism in the thirties, built around sketches of various people who are the ruins and monuments of the subtitle. The result is a very interesting book indeed. He is writing, Kempton says, about people possessed by a dream, people who "are a minority in any time. They are the ones who doubt neither that there is a good side and a bad one nor that they are ready to die with the good. They are moved, not by a mood, but by some inner compulsion. It is these committed and these possessed who concern us here."

Communism in the United States won many intellectuals, but it failed to win a mass following. Kempton has his own ideas on the reasons for this failure, perhaps best exemplified in his discussion of Joe Curran and the National Maritime Union. For a long time the NMU was a Communist preserve; Kempton thinks the reasons are not hard to find. "Any insurgent religion," he says, "good or bad, makes its first converts among people capable of large feelings of love and hate. And there were not many sailors, granted the life they lived, who could bring to this particular religion the capacity for universal love. There were more who could understand universal hate."

The sailor was underpaid, badly fed, exploited, forgotten. To get a berth paying less than two dollars a day, he often had to bribe or crawl. "The sailor had no sense of the community and the community had no sense of the sailor. Down in these depths, a different sort of man was being created, rootless, kinless, and unforgiving, to whom words like mercy and gratitude were from another language, never to be translated because never experienced."

These were the men who created the NMU. Many of them were Communists when the union was born, and many more became Communists. But they remained sailors. For a while the Party had the NMU in its pocket. Then ideology threatened the welfare of the union, and most of the Communists promptly kicked the Party in the face.

The sailors, Kempton thinks, were rare birds among American Communists—men who joined the Party because of their quarrel with the external reality of their own lives rather than as a result of internal tensions. When the problems they faced were better dealt with by leaving the Party, they walked away without a tear or a backward glance. They were, most of them, what people call bread-and-butter Communists, not ideologues.

FOR Kempton, this is a fundamental distinction. He himself was for a very brief period a member of the Young Communist League. When he saw the face behind the totalitarian mask, he got out fast. And now he wonders: Why did other people get in? And why did some get out while others stayed in?

The answer, he thinks, may be found in a person's reaction to reality. Some Communists, like the sailor-Communists of the NMU, joined the Party because they knew injustice and privation, but they had no taste for living in a dream world; as soon as the Party's fantasies began to intrude between them and the real world, they got out. For others, fantasy was a necessity. They were in the Party in response to internal tension, not external reality. As a result, it was practically impossible to shake their faith. Changes in the U.S. social order, the accomplishments of the New Deal, the Nazi-Soviet pact, the postwar aggressions of the Soviet Union—none of these things could touch the hard core of their convictions. They were true believers.

Kempton plays on this interesting, but perilously easy, psychological theme throughout the book, using contrast where he can. On one side he presents Lee Pressman, longtime chief counsel for the CIO, who comes through in his pages as perhaps the closest American equivalent of the classic Bolshevik, almost Georgian in his lack of sentiment; on the other he gives us Gardner Jackson, who emerged as a native American radical at the time of Sacco and Vanzetti and remained always blessedly long on heart and short on ideology. He emphasizes the accomplishments of Thomas Patterson and the non-Communist Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters by stressing the large irrelevancies of Paul Robeson ("an African god with a Phi Beta Kappa key").

Some of the people Kempton describes do not quite fit into the expected mold. There is, for example, Elizabeth Bentley, who became a pliant tool of Communist espionage, yet did so for reasons which

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seem to have been about as ideological as those prompting a normal Bronx housewife to help her husband in his work. Anne Moos Remington is here, the lady who made poor William Remington promise before their marriage that he would be true to the Revolution, and did it as casually as she might have asked him to remain an Eagle Scout. And here too are the Hollywood Ten, as well as their brethren, the authors of the now forgotten Party-line proletarian novels.

JUST what the effect of Mr. Kempton's book will be on current controversies, I am not sure. The right wing exaggerates the extent of Communist influence by implying that American political thought in the thirties was almost completely corrupted by Communism—an estimate, oddly enough, which corresponds to and fortifies the Communists' belief that they were the really important people of the period. This is, I think, nonsense. Yet the effect of Mr. Kempton's book may unwittingly be too much in the opposite direction. His Communists are ruins, and they are such complete and inconsequential ruins. In his error, if it is one, Kempton is closer to the truth than those who would dismiss the entire period as the Red Decade in American life. But it does seem to me that the climate of opinion in labor, intellectual and liberal circles was more vaguely sympathetic to the Revolution than anti-; the Popular Front was a quality of the mind as well as a political phenomenon. This fact, added to the abdication from the social scene of many who should have been active, made Communism in the thirties important out of all proportion to its actual membership.

Of all the characters Mr. Kempton discusses, I am not sure we cannot learn most from J. B. Matthews who in his own person manages to sum up a small yet significant part of the political history of our times. Whether in his home town in the South ("the Sunday seat of the shouting Methodists," says Kempton), in Java as a Protestant missionary, in New York as a tireless joiner and promoter of Communist fronts, or in his present capacity as a pillar of the right wing, Dr. Matthews has never seemed a man unduly plagued by doubt. By his own count, he collaborated actively in at least twenty-eight Communist-backed enterprises and held office in fifteen of them—including a term as chairman of one of the most obvious of all Party fronts, the American League Against War and Fascism. Yet, throughout it all, one gets the impression that Matthews was something of an innocent; the ins and outs of the *Daily Worker* were not for him. Eventually, on a Communist-supported strike involving his own firm, Matthews jigged when the Party line jogged; as a result he was denounced in the Communist press, and disillusion set in fast. What happened then is interesting.

By 1936 Matthews was voting for Alf Landon; in 1944 he refused to vote for Dewey on the grounds that he was an agent of the New Deal. In 1952 he is reported to have voted for Dwight D. Eisenhower, but only under pressure, and he has since come to regret this left-wing ballot. Once he could see only the far left; now he can see only the far right. For him the middle ground seems not to exist. He was wrong in the thirties, and he is wrong now—the victim, apparently, of a form of political astigmatism which has been one of the major afflictions of our times. Heaven knows, he has never lacked company.

A Guidebook to Modern Literature

THE MODERN WRITER AND HIS WORLD. By G. S. Fraser. Criterion. $3.95.

By JOSEPH M. DUFFY, JR.

THE subject of this long, crowded volume is, the author asserts, "very broadly . . . the relation of the writer to his age." Much of the book is composed of lecture material delivered in 1950 to Japanese students and designed to give them a sense of modern English literature. The work is a guide to the topography of English literature after 1890 thickly marked with place names and breathlessly packed with descriptions of points of interest.

According to the dust jacket on the American edition, this book should give "shape and point" to what "ordinary" readers "have hitherto regarded as a set of chaotic and disconnected tendencies." Who are the "ordinary" readers of the New World? My guess is that they will be found almost exclusively in the academic communities. Because it is so encyclopedic in its range of information and because it so neatly and so uncontroversially outlines the merits and defects of contemporary English writers, *The Modern Writer and His World* should prove a valuable source book for graduate students of English and their professors. After all, modern literature now has status in American universities and even in our academic journals.

In view of this new professional interest, graduate students have been required to "get up" modern writers for their doctoral comprehensives and professors have had to talk to survey classes about writers not all of them safely encrustated by history and the opinions of others. Except for the lack of an adequate index, *The Modern Writer and His World* is a worthy book for such readers.

A long introductory chapter outlines the background of ideas against which modern literature has been created. In it we are told that

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ours is an age of anxiety (*angst*) and that Kierkegaard — among others — has been an important philosophical influence and that recent drama has been thin because great drama has traditionally been written in periods of cultural stability. Then follows a section each on the novel, drama, poetry, and the trends of criticism. These sections are lucidly ordered in chronological fashion. Moreover, within the chronological frame Mr. Fraser attempts, where possible, to further classify his material: in speaking of the novels of the 1930's, the "best of which reflect a state of social tension," he divides this fiction into four types — the symbolic melodrama, the novel of social allegory, etc. This precision is very helpful especially when it is accompanied by a list of authors and summaries of their characteristic works.

The usefulness of Mr. Fraser's approach should be apparent to any graduate student who has had to pass a general examination or to any professor who has had to teach a survey course in a field outside his "specialization." Tidy generalizations and pointed judgments can be picked up from Mr. Fraser and passed on without any need on anyone's part for tedious reflection.

Thus E. M. Forster is described as the novelist who has "best crystallized" the Edwardian age for us and "who has exposed its predicaments with the most delicate insight and sympathy;" Shaw's great lack is observed to be "a sense of poetry;" and F. R. Leavis is praised for his inquiring mind and for his rigorous standards of judgment and is criticized for the inhibiting effect of those standards on the younger generation of Cambridge writers. On a larger scale, Mr. Fraser's generalization on the Irish should render the literature of that remote race more available to the Japanese and to myopic Americans: "The Irish are remarkable among the peoples of the British Isles for their fluency of speech, their ready wit, and their taste for rhetoric."

Mr. Fraser is wonderfully well-read. If the publication of the book had been delayed a year, there would have been, doubtless, an addition of a dozen or more names and titles. He is agreeable, garrulous, tireless, and tolerant. But he is not bold. At his most daring he claims a place for Yeats among the major English poets, doubts the durability of Christopher Fry, and feels the "greatest moral and intellectual respect" for Empson of all the poets of his generation. These are respectable and welcome opinions, yet Mr. Fraser offers them tentatively as though they were remarkably risky.

One wishes Mr. Fraser were disagreeable or intolerant or even fatigued. Or a militant Marxist, Catholic, atheist, or democrat. Then there might be some excitement in the landscape he surveys—a shock, a vision of a country glorious or mean. As it is, it stretches all before us in this big book, spacious, well-populated, and egregiously banal. That it is so will make little difference to those readers who, I assume, will use *The Modern Writer and His World*.

Young Man in the City

SING NO SAD SONGS. By John Hazard Wildman. Exposition. $3.

By FRANK GETLEIN

IT is refreshing to read a novel by a southerner that is not a southern novel. Mr. Wildman happily ignores the stage props and stock characters that are as expected in the form as were hidden staircases and shrieks in the night in an earlier over-conventionalized genre. On the contrary, Mr. Wildman is writing of the American "urban area" that we all know and that *Fortune* regularly assures us we shall all meet no matter where we flee. It is consoling to find it at last even in Louisiana.

If not southern in much but the heat, which gets mentioned from time to time, *Sing No Sad Songs* is not without literary relatives. The bones of the story have been used often in tales of that urban area. Sensitive girl marries bright young man on the make. Young man ages rapidly as he makes; girl remains sensitive. At that point, in life, there are a large number of things to be done: golf, bridge, gardening, travel, gossip, good works of all kinds. In literature, due to the weight of tradition, there is only one: adultery. It is an inevitability that Mr. Wildman has had the strength to elude. Actually, this is a minor strength of the novel and a minor reason for its being the interesting novel it is.

Its major strength lies in the portrait of the first person heroine, Mary Brandon. Mary's reaction to the grabbing and grubbing of her husband, Carl Brandon, is common enough in the urban area situation, but it is one rarely written about. She retired within herself and cultivated amusement at the scramble. She could be extremely amusing at the tactics and principles of practical politics, but, despite her professed love for Carl, she was incapable of reaching him a helping hand—not in the workaday business of winning elections, but in the more serious affair of coming to terms with himself. As Mary tells their story, the telling itself becomes a battle within her, reflected accurately in her repeated efforts to probe beneath the clever comment that obstructs her view.

What *Sing No Sad Songs* does for that stock situation is to make it come alive by the use of a real girl of the milieu, a literary provincial lady in an age when provincial still means something but not very much. It does not do so well by a couple of its other relatives. One is the "Catholic" motive that clutters up a lot of novels these days. Carl is a Catholic in addition to being an unprincipled politician and a faithless husband. Somehow, non-Catholic Mary is vaguely attracted to her husband's faith. She never actually makes the step of conversion, indeed the question hardly arises, but the figure of Christ is used to make the novel's presumed crucial decision and the

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impression is that once more God has been dragged in on the grounds that literature should serve religion.

The other relative, existentialist violence, which hovers around the frame of the story, never really poses a serious possibility. With it, one feels the force of literary convention.

In spite of these two false notes and in spite of the pretense of a sharply unified frame of decision, the reality of the book, the married life and the mind of Mary Brandon, is worth reading.

American Myth

THE DREAM OF SUCCESS. By Kenneth S. Lynn. Little, Brown. $4.

By HENRY POPKIN

IRVIN C. Wyllie's *The Self-Made Man in America,* last year's study of the heyday of the Horatio Alger myth, has been followed by Kenneth S. Lynn's inquiry into the decline of this myth. Mr. Lynn traces the careers of five American novelists who discovered early in the twentieth century that success is hard to achieve.

The five novelists, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Frank Norris, David Graham Phillips, and Robert Herrick, were unwilling witnesses to the popularity of the Alger myth. Dreiser was tormented by fear of failure. London found his own success so congenial that it conquered his early socialism—and so unsatisfying that it drove him to suicide. Norris was intimidated by his father's triumph in business. Phillips at once worshipped the idea of success and attacked its most typical exponents. Herrick cast about ineffectively for a substitute.

The Dream of Success belongs more to the history of mass culture than to the history of ideas. Mr. Lynn prefers to bypass strictly intellectual influences and to survey instead such popular currents as the effect of Alger's writings (read by the novelists in childhood, if at all) and of the common attitudes toward success. This practice limits what can be said about the novelists, but the limitations would be even narrower if Mr. Lynn had not imperfectly distinguished the Alger myth from some similar pattern.

As Professor Wyllie has pointed out, Horatio Alger, Jr., agreed with Henry Ward Beecher and Elbert Hubbard that success is the reward of industry, thrift, and, especially, virtue. Real life was quite different. Certainly people succeeded in the Age of Alger, but Alger's interpretation is a *moralized* view of the process. It is therefore inexact to say, as Mr. Lynn does on his first page, that "books on success were no more than mirrors held up to nature." The nineteenth century books on success—described quite fully by Professor Wyllie—were distorting mirrors. They were not nature but "nature methodized"—moralistically.

First then, we must separate the idealistic Alger myth from the reality—the unattractive ways in which Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, and others amassed their fortunes. (The facts were available to the novelists, and Mr. Lynn makes as much use of them as he needs.) Second, we must isolate the cynical philosophy of success that might have been made to order for the American Robber Barons—social Darwinism. This hard-boiled doctrine preached the survival of the fittest—not the most virtuous. It was widely interpreted to American audiences by Herbert Spencer and William Graham Summers.

Mr. Lynn says not a word about this tradition; the names of Darwin, Spencer and Summers do not appear in the index, although their ideas obviously affected both Dreiser and London. But to omit social Darwin is a necessity for *The Dream of Success.* Mr. Lynn prefers the influences that can not be avoided, the ideas that the novelist reflects in spite of himself, to the influence and ideas that the novelist deliberately chooses and dramatizes. He is more interested in London as a child reading Horatio Alger than in London as a man reading Herbert Spencer. If Dreiser thinks he is dramatizing Spencer's ideas or if Norris thinks he is imitating Zola, it is more important to Mr. Lynn that they are, willy-nilly, imbibing the spirit of the times and commenting on Horatio Alger. The writers' conscious intentions, intellectual or aesthetic—what they want to do and what they think they are doing—are all secondary to instincts, compulsions, and concealed autobiography. And Mr. Lynn exhibits an alarming certainty as to the real nature of his subjects' unacknowledged motivation.

Operating gracefully within his self-imposed limits, Mr. Lynn provides suggestive insights into such novels as *Sister Carrie* (in which Hurstwood seems to reflect Dreiser's fears of failure), *The Call of the Wild* (which is read as a success story with the dog Buck in the role of Alger hero), and *The Pit* (in which the three main characters bear a distinct resemblance to the author and his parents). Ingenious as Mr. Lynn's critiques frequently are, they fall short of being definitive because they must observe the iron necessity of minimizing the novelists' conscious intentions.

The analysis of *McTeague* is a case in point. Mr. Lynn views this novel as a warning against "the loathsomeness of sex," in which Norris implicitly defends the idea of success and shows how sex ruins a self-made man. The traditional interpretation, however, is that the characters are destroyed by greed, a prominent motive which is made especially conspicuous by Norris's heavy-handed use of gold as a symbol. But greed is an ugly name for one of the basic components of the drive for success, and, according to Mr. Lynn's version of Norris's spiritual biography, the novelist cannot at this point be attacking the great American dream. Consequently, Norris's deliberate emphasis on greed must be overlooked and his less emphatic indictment of sex brought to the fore. Our loss is the greater because what Mr. Lynn says about *McTeague* is valid and important. To be so offhanded with the novelist's plain intention is to prevent any possibility of writing a definitive critique of the novel. In short, *The Dream of Success* has the truth but not the whole truth.

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French Fiction

THE CONTEMPORARY FRENCH NOVEL. By Henri Peyre. Oxford. $5.

By VIVIAN MERCIER

PROFESSOR Peyre has written an exceptionally *useful* book; not content with giving extended treatment to the novels of Martin du Gard, Duhamel, Romains, Radiguet, Proust, Gide, Mauriac, Giono, Saint-Exupéry, Malraux, Sartre, Camus, and Simone de Beauvoir —in that order—he has also supplied a thirty-page "Panorama of Present-day Novelists" which contains brief surveys of the work of ninety-three other writers. An "Introduction," which looks back over the traditional French novel as seen from the standpoint of today, and chapters on "The Crisis in French Fiction, 1910-1930," "The Impact of the American Novel," and "The Present Temper in France Judged Through French Literature" round out the book.

M. Peyre is not the sort of man to be content with mere utility, however, as anyone who has read or listened to him will know. Beauty he perhaps does not strive for, but his force, wit, and elegance make very acceptable substitutes. Nowhere, not even in his "Panorama", is he content to be pedestrian. Each thumb-nail sketch of a novelist has the pithiness of a *New Yorker* short review. "Beckett," he says, "writes only for the unhappy few"—an allusion to Stendhal's dedication of *Le Rouge et le Noir* "to the happy few." The hero of *L'Apprenti* by Raymond Guérin "peeps through keyholes and seems fascinated by what he observes."

The difference between M. Peyre and the usual compiler of handbooks about contemporary literature does not end there. This most unorthodox of professors gives us slashing, highly personal judgments instead of hedging his bets; of the much admired Julien Gracq, for instance, he says, "We must declare that his novels appear to us as unbearably pseudo-romantic, as fake rehashings of Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis.

Sometimes this very personal

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outlook may be regarded as a blemish; a survey of the chief French novelists since 1930 ought, one feels, to treat as major certain writers whom M. Peyre ignores. He himself lists some of them: Colette, Céline, Bernanos, Green, Queneau, Aymé, Cocteau, Giraudoux, and Montherlant—pointing out that the last three are less important as novelists than as playwrights or "moralists." It takes him less than a page to show how limited and outmoded Colette's work is, but he frankly admits that he is so prejudiced against Céline and Bernanos, "two visionary giants with clay feet, addicted to orgies of words," as to prefer omitting them to the risk of committing some more positive injustice against them.

More serious in its effect on M. Peyre's taste in his basically atheistic viewpoint, which leads him to overrate the atheistic novels of Sartre and Camus. One of his healthiest critical traits, an unwillingness to be bored, forsakes him when he confronts that arch-bore, Sartre. *La Nausée,* one of the dullest, least inventive novels that I have ever succeeded in finishing, becomes "one of the masterpieces of the twentieth century. . . . It has the fresh impetuousness of a youthful or an early novel. . . ."

Yet his viewpoint does not prevent M. Peyre from doing full justice to Mauriac's literary virtues as well as his vices. Nor does his urban and urbane outlook bar him from reveling in the work of Jean Giono, a writer with whom he has serious political disagreements. The Provençal nature mystic, a cross between Blake and D. H. Lawrence (minus the sex obsession), has never been adequately treated in English before, to my knowledge. One hopes that this French admirer of Melville and Whitman will find a larger audience in the United States as a result of M. Peyre's chapter on him.

For M. Peyre is the kind of critic who can build and destroy reputations—and likes to do so. Interpretation, with him, runs a very bad second to evaluation. It is a joy these days to find a critic who is not afraid to stick his neck out, even if at times one itches to chop his head off. M. Peyre's way with the English language is as cavalier as his criticism—and nearly always as successful. Any man who uses the verb "to scathe" in all its moods and tenses instead of being content with its participles wins my admiration.

The Contemporary French Novel, viewed as a whole, is perhaps less than the sum of its parts, in the sense that it lacks a unifying thesis; at times, as indicated above, the theme of revolt against subjectivity and solipsism confers unity, but M. Peyre has too much integrity to slur over conflicting trends. The multiplicity of viewpoints in French literature, like that in French politics, may yet prove to be a symptom of vitality rather than decadence.

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